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ABSTRACT

Eight conference papers on language teacher development are presented, including: "Mosaics of Teacher Development and Socialization" (Andrew Barfield, Paul A. Beaufait, Sean Conley, Tim Murphey, Katsura Haruko), a panel presentation on aspects of and experiments in teacher development; "Questions About Teaching? Answers from Teachers!" (David Cozy, Atsuko Kashiwagi, Eugenia Medrano-Endo, Christopher Jon Poel, Spencer Weatherly), a roundtable discussion of myths of language teaching in Japan; "What Makes a Good Language Lesson? Part 2" (Stephen M. Ryan), reporting a survey of 54 teachers concerning the characteristics of a good classroom language lesson; "Understanding Introductions Survey: Less Anxiety, More Interaction" (Duane Kindt), concerning students' self-reported strategies for understanding the teacher; "How Students Account for Their Poor English Skills" (Lana Yuen), in which a study of students' perceptions of their own English skills is reported; "Exploring Teacher Education Through Video" (Eric Reynolds, Mark O'Neil) concerning a project to videotape and provide feedback on teachers' classroom performance; "Cross-Cultural Aspects of Teachers' Roles" (Barbara H. Wright), presenting results of a study of ideal and actual teacher classroom behaviors; and "Materials Writers NSIG Workshop: Professional Critique of Preliminary Textbook Manuscripts" (Ian G. Gleadall), describing a workshop on textbook writing. (MSE)

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Section Two
Teacher Development

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Mosaics of Teacher Development and Socialization

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Overview

Taking a broad view of teacher development, the second annual colloquium of the Teacher Education N-SIG considered teacher development and socialization in pre-service, in-service, and distance learning programs. The colloquium was organized interactively, with four concurrent poster sessions followed by small group discussions and moderated plenary feedback. In this paper, the first section looks at the initial process of teachers becoming teachers. Next, teaching institutions themselves are examined both in how they shape teachers and how teachers shape them. Sharing journals as a way to bring a group learning experience to a distance learning program are taken up in the third section. The last section looks at video-taping and risk-logging as tools for effective teacher development.

Andrew Barfield:
Growing pains: The first two years of teaching

When do you become a teacher? By the time Japanese undergraduates start their pre-service English teacher training, they will have gone through over eight years of English classes, and developed an important sense of what their possible training needs are. To examine this more closely, I developed a pre-service training needs questionnaire, which was administered to postgraduate (would-be teachers) at Tsukuba University and third-year students at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (n = 55). For reasons of space, I report here on the main section of the questionnaire only.

Method

Each of the fifty items was rated on a five-point Likert scale by the respondents. Factor analysis was then used to see how the questionnaire items correlated (Kline, 1994, p. 5 ff.). Principal factor analysis produced ten factors with Eigenvalues > 1. Three subsequent varimax rotations were performed (cut-off at > 0.4) to obtain both significant and meaningful correlations between the variables of each factor.

Results

The following five factors were obtained in the final varimax rotation:

Factor 1:

Item	Factor loading
15. learning how to organise group work	0.78
9. learning how to organise pairwork	0.72
16. learning how to team-teach	0.71
10. learning different theories of language learning	0.68
26. learning how to use drama in the classroom	0.62
27. learning how to assess each individual learner	0.51
13. learning how to use English for giving instructions	0.48
17. learning theories of language communication	0.45
23. learning how to teach listening skills	0.48
30. learning about different learning styles and strategies	0.41

Factor 2:

Item	Factor loading
48. learning how to teach reading aloud	0.71
1. learning how to speak clearly and loudly to a class	0.71
20. learning how to write on a blackboard	0.66
22. learning how to deal with the pressures of teaching	0.64
34. learning how to write school reports about students	0.50
41. learning how to introduce dialogues	0.46
24. learning how to be a homeroom teacher	0.42
50. learning how to give presentations about my teaching techniques and ideas	0.41
5. learning how to catch a class's interest	0.41

Factor 3:

Item	Factor loading
23. learning how to teach listening skills	0.67
21. learning how to teach writing skills	0.56
3. learning how to teach mixed levels in the same class	-0.52
19. learning how to teach reading skills	0.52
49. learning how to teach speaking skills	0.50
6. learning how to counsel students about personal problems	-0.50
32. learning how to teach discussion and debating skills	0.49
17. learning theories of language communication	0.46
25. learning how to use computers	0.45

Factor 4:

Item	Factor loading
14. learning how to cover all details in a textbook	-0.61
44. learning how to analyse my own teaching	0.61
11. learning how to do my own classroom research	0.55
47. learning how to prepare learners for exams	-0.53
18. learning how to translate Japanese into English	-0.51
37. learning how to observe other teachers teaching	0.45

Factor 5:

Item	Factor loading
38. learning how to explain grammar rules	0.71
2. learning how to correct grammatical errors	0.61
29. learning grammar theories	0.59
46. learning how to translate English into Japanese	0.52
18. learning how to translate Japanese into English	0.41

Discussion

The first factor may be interpreted as learning how to create and manage an interactive classroom, with an emphasis on individualized learning; the second as a major concern with the presentation of oneself as a teacher both within the English lesson, and in terms of initial professional socialization. The third factor reveals a preoccupation with skills-based teaching, language communication theory, and computer competency. The fourth factor centers on learning how to develop collaboratively one's own teaching through analysis, research and observation of colleagues, but this is seen in conflict with a slavish syllabus, exams and translation. The final factor might be interpreted as a concern with learning how to deal with questions of accuracy and correction, and using translation in close association with this.

Conclusion

The good news is that, in this small-scale exploratory study, pre-service trainees show a clear concern with conducting interactive language lessons and understanding their learners individually; they want to learn presentation skills and practical skills-based teaching, and develop further through collaboration and research. They also have a concern with translation as a means of dealing with accuracy. The painful part is the conflict that these teacher development concerns are perceived to have with a broader context of mixed levels (large classes?), a slavish syllabus, counseling students (ijime?), among others. The question is whether pre-service training (and later in-service) courses take enough account of this or not.

Acknowledgments

I'd like to express my thanks to John Shillaw at Tsukuba University and Richard Smith at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies for helping to administer the questionnaires to their students. I'd also like to record my gratitude to Ms. Tin Tin Htun of Tsukuba University for her generous assistance with the statistical analysis.

Paul A. Beaufait: Institutions as bases for teacher development

The institutional environment in which teaching and learning take place frames and focuses input for teacher development. It sustains uptake; it reflects output. Dynamic, dramatic, or dead, institutional settings can validate, defeat or redirect individual development processes. Whether teacher development involves student-centered activities or curricular developments, self-development or peer-mentoring; institutions are at once stages for our teaching practices and venues for reflection and collaboration. For example, explicitly within a school-based framework for workshops, Moon (1994) cites minimal conditions for "professional talk" to encourage teacher development:

1. A plan and purpose;
2. Linkage to recent practice (after Schön, 1987, p. 101);
3. A variety of perspectives coming from the different roles and experiences of participants;
4. Feedback on participants' views; and,
5. Reflection on the whole development process (Moon, 1994, p. 53).

Hayes (1995) confirms the school base, arguing for classroom-centered teacher development activities:

Teachers need to be able to see the impact of the proposed innovation on daily classroom procedures if it is to have any validity. Holding developmental activities in schools also raises their status .... This indicates respect for the school environment rather than downgrading its importance (pp. 256-267).

During colloquium interaction, I explored audience perspectives of institutions as bases for teacher development, by eliciting views which the audience members 'posted' on stickers to four different modules of the Institutions as Bases: Post & Peek© workspace before they 'peeked' at ideas from a different teachers' group1. The plan and purpose of the workspace were to facilitate sharing and reflection amongst the audience, the preceding group of teachers, and the presenter. What follows is a qualitative - quantitative synopsis, providing feedback on audience views. The synopsis is followed by brief reflection on the Post & Peek© process itself.

Synopsis

Rough paragraph counts may best indicate the number of different ideas elicited. In just a few minutes, audience members contributed 1.76 times more paragraphs to the two negative, or down-side *Disadvantages and Barriers* modules (n¶s = 67) than they did to the two positive-outlooking *Advantages and Bridges* modules (p¶s = 38; see Examples, below). More members, 1.44 times more (n = 26), contributed to the negative modules, than did to the positive ones (p = 18), writing 1.37 times more words (nwords:pwords = 419:305). In sum, there were more negative contributions.

Can such predominantly negative contributions indicate predominantly negative thinking about teacher development in the institutions where teachers teach? I hope not. Not wishing to focus on the negative here, I will highlight audience members' views with examples selected from the positive modules before reflecting on the elicitation and feedback process.

Examples

Among advantages, these were mentioned:

- Company-based contributor (3 ¶s, sic)
  1. *Develop cohesiveness in the program - personnel, and group.*
  2. *Professional development of staff.*
  3. *Builds morale.*
- Canadian university language institute contributor (1 ¶, sic)

The school is a learning community, so all participants — teachers, students, administrators and staff — engage in conversation about education.

I believe the preceding comment presents a spitting image of Moon's "professional talk" (p. 53), and represents an ideal to strive for. As for bridges, these were given:

- University-based contributor (1 ¶, sic)

  If the university cares enough to provide both time and training the support in itself is a bridge.
- No institution listed by contributor (2 ¶s, sic)

  Peer support.

  Positive student feedback to new ideas.
- No institution listed by contributor (2 ¶s, sic)

  Inspires trust and involvement in the organization.

  Obviously helps see "teaching as a profession" rather than a job.

These comments highlight the value of school-based teacher development, and underscore Okada's conclusion, "There is a need to establish a practical support system that can help teachers ... take part in development-oriented teacher education programs. The lesson is: If teachers can develop, then curriculum development will follow through conclusion" (with Barfield, et al., 1996, p. 16).

Process

The Post & Peek© workspace facilitated sharing and reflection among professionals in a collegial if not institutional environment. Peeking at predecessors' views after posting their own enabled circulating audience members to share their ideas and compare them immediately with

others', including those from a distinct group of teachers1, while still party to discussion amongst their peers and the presenter.

Though surprised by the negative balance of contributions obtained in session, I feel their diversity will be useful. As the process is cyclical and compounding, I will endeavor to use them as additional background for future interactions involving teachers, who reflect — positively — on development opportunities in the institutions where they teach and learn.

Sean Conley:
Using shared journals in distance learning

Distance learning can be a lonely experience. One works alone, reading articles, writing papers, wondering if anyone else has the same problems, the same experiences. The opportunity to learn from others, so central to the principles of humanistic education, is often missing. Journals written by and shared among a group of distance learners can help fill that gap.

During the colloquium I described a five-step process for using shared journals as a way to work with training materials in distance teacher education. Unlike action research journals or dialogue journals, the purpose of this kind of shared journaling among a group of four to six participants is to promote learning from others, to encourage thoughtful consideration of training material in light of the participants' classroom experience, and to connect theories presented in the materials with practice as experienced by participants.

Stages

There are five stages to writing a shared journal entry:

Table 1
Writing Shared Journal Entry Stages

1. Input: Participants read an assigned book or article, view a videotaped demonstration, or listen to an audio-taped lecture.
2. Personalizing: Participants consider what idea or technique in the material speaks to them or strikes them as useful and consider how it might be applied in their teaching.
3. Experimenting: Participants apply what they've chosen - incorporating it into their teaching of a specific class.
4. Writing: Participants write a journal entry that is shared with others in their group, participants write about what it was that struck them, how they incorporated it into their teaching, and what they think and feel about the experience.
5. Sharing: Participants fax or e-mail their journal entry to the others and receive and read what the others have written. Individual responses are written to authors of entries that a participant finds especially interesting or helpful.

In a training program, required readings are often followed by study questions found at the end of each article. Working with materials using shared journals, participants have the freedom to personalize the articles, taking from them what they find valuable, rather than what they are directed to by study questions. In this, there is both the challenge and the chance to make the article meaningful and useful in an immediate way. By trying in their classrooms what participants have found stimulating in the material, they bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Generating ideas

Moving from experimenting to writing participants must, as Edge (1992) says, put [their] thoughts into a coherent shape . . . . to communicate them to someone else (Edge, 1992, p. 7). It is a process that sometimes causes you to see properly for the first time just exactly how your ideas do fit together. (Edge, op.cit.). Writing thus helps generate ideas and works as a way of setting off the

brain's natural ability to create possible answers. The process of writing entries about their thoughts and experiences for an audience of their peers taps into both of these processes: participants must clarify their ideas in order to communicate them to others, and in the process they make discoveries about their own understanding of the material and generate new ideas, questions and answers to problems.

In the final sharing stage participants read how others have understood and made use of the material. Here, a participant might be challenged by the discovery that others understood and applied the material differently, leading to reconsideration of the material or a reevaluation of their own understanding - the rough equivalent of class discussion. On the practical level, this is also a chance to see what others have done in their classrooms and gather ideas to try on their own.

Conclusion

Feedback from participants has indicated that shared journals help them feel less alone, that they find comfort in the knowledge that others share similar problems and frustrations, and that descriptions of others' classroom activities are helpful and interesting. Though some find personalizing the material challenging, many indicate that they feel it gives them a sense of freedom. Correspondence between participants shows that they are often surprised and challenged by different ways of understanding and applying the training materials. Nearly all participants have indicated a preference for shared journaling over working independently.

Tim Murphey:
Increasing teacher awareness through class videoing and risk-logging

Teachers in graduate school and a continuing education course were asked to video-tape their classes, and then to watch their video and analyze it themselves with the help of a feedback form early in the semester. Next, they were asked to video tape themselves later in the semester and again analyze the video and to write a short report comparing the two videos. They knew they were going to do these two videos at the outset of the course.

Taking risks

At the same time, they were asked to take small risks in their classrooms each week. There were asked to do something different from what they normally did. These could be things that were modeled each week by the teacher educator conducting the course, or they could be something else. They could be small things like simply playing background music the first few minutes or during an exercise. The idea was that teachers were not going to change drastically; that would be too frightening and probably unecological. However, they could enjoy implementing small changes within what was possible, within their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1934/1962).

Sharing risks for feedback

Each week teachers came to the courses and shared their Risk Logs with the other participants in pairs and then passed them in to the trainer for comments. They were returned the following week. The class videoing form was turned in to the trainer early in the semester and the second later with a report comparing the two. A few students began voluntarily exchanging videos with each other to get feedback and a few chose to give theirs to the instructor to get feedback. These were seen as very positive acts. However, in order not to make others feel that they needed to do this, these were not encouraged, but rather acknowledged as an option. Both methods seem to have led to more independent teacher development for the participants — which they will hopefully continue doing.

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Questions About Teaching? Answers From Teachers!

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Introduction

The presenters, who together have more than sixty years teaching experience, remember how it was when they were starting out. They remember that they wished there had been experienced teachers around to answer the questions that arose in the classroom and workplace. Now that they are experienced teachers, the presenters felt that this roundtable would be a useful forum in which those new to teaching and/or Japan could take advantage of their long and varied experience.

This proved to be the case. The discussion was lively, and could easily have continued beyond the allotted time. Clearly teachers at all levels are eager to interact with those who have had different experiences, to ask questions which have arisen in the course of their work, and to share experiences they may have had that could be helpful to teachers in other situations.

The five presenters opened the roundtable with a discussion of five myths of language teaching in Japan. David Cozy (DC) debunked the notion that, though Japanese have trouble speaking English,

they are excellent writers and readers. Eugenia (Genie) Medrano-Endo (GME) questioned the idea that teachers always know best. Atsuko Kashiwagi (AK) wondered whether it's really a sin for students and teachers to use the students' mother tongue in the classroom. Chris Poel (CP) argued that sticking students in groups may not be enough to create a communicative classroom, while Spencer Weatherly (SW) suggested that Japanese students, at least at the university level, may not be the "super students" we've been led to expect.

When the presenters had finished with their challenges to the conventional wisdom, the roundtable got underway.

The Roundtable

Question: Do learning styles exist in Japan? Isn't Japan a homogeneous society?

GME: People feel that Japanese students are mostly passive learners and that this is their learning style. Actually, it is not so much that Japanese learners prefer to learn this way than it is that they have been conditioned to learn in such a way. At a young age, students are discouraged from "deviating from the norm" and from voicing their preferences in the classroom, mainly because teachers are afraid (1) that they will lose control in their classes, and (2) that this will go on until adulthood and cause problems for the "homogeneous" society.

Question: Why do so many teachers refuse to acknowledge that there are different learning styles in the classroom?

DC: Perhaps the main reason is that, among Japanese (and foreigners too) the notion that Japanese are individuals before they are members of a group called "We Japanese" is not universally accepted.

CP: Right, the notion that Japanese are different from each other is certainly not accepted in the classroom, although the idea that all learners learn the same is an absolute myth, in Japan or anywhere else. And while some (or most) teachers seem to have a hard time understanding this, students don't. Whenever I have my students write about their educational experiences, they always mention learner differences, though of course they don't use that term.

SW: Moreover, the idea that all students learn the same way can be extremely destructive. Students can easily come to feel that they are stupid if some system works for their classmates but not for them. It may well be, though, that employing a different way of learning will allow those students to do great.

GME: Actually, there are a lot of issues involved here. First, teachers generally have their own ideas of what it means to learn a language. A lot of this is based on their own experiences — we tend to teach as we were taught — and also, to a certain extent, on their personality types. Thus, you can see how teachers will vary in the way they teach a particular learning item. They will normally teach in what they think is the best way to learn, but that won't necessarily correspond with what is best for the students.

The other issue here is work. Teachers who are used to teaching in a certain style will be reluctant to change their classroom rhythm. It will mean that much more planning and extra work at first. They will soon discover, though, that this extra work will actually mean less work in the long run.

Question: If we accept that students do have different learning styles, doesn't that present an enormous problem for teachers? I mean if we're teaching classes of twenty or thirty or forty different students with as many different learning styles, how can we possibly plan lessons that are appropriate for all of them?

CP: First of all we need to be eclectic, to vary our activities. Give the students some groupwork, some pairwork, and some time to work alone. Give them some drills and some silent "contemplation" time. Let them play games; make them write. There are literally hundreds of different things that a teacher can do in class, and if you do hundreds of different things, you're bound to find something, lots of things, that fit every student's learning style.

GME: At the beginning of the term, inform them that each person learns in a different way and that by being aware of one's own learning style and going with it, one is able to learn more effectively. You can also tell them that circumstances in the classroom do not always make this possible, but that

when they're by themselves, they can and should try to follow their learning style. This will give them the idea, too, that their learning is basically their own responsibility.

Now, back to the classroom. Big classes mean many students and many learning styles. But, don't think that you have to cater to 30 or 40 different learning styles. You will find that you can classify your students into five or six learner types that will be manageable. As you categorize students accordingly, you — and your students — will find that there is an overlap of learning styles among students. A "concrete learner," for example, may have a lot in common with a "communicative learner." Likewise, an "analytical learner" may not be exclusively analytical, but will welcome communicative activities as well. The point is that the teacher should plan activities that will be more readily accepted by the type of learners in his/her class.

Comment: Actually, learning styles cannot be clearly categorized into four different learner types. Usually, there is no clear-cut line and most learners are a mixture of different types.
GME: Yes, that's true. The Willing study[1] was an example that talked about four different learner types of that particular study. But the whole point of the myth is not so much to state that there are X number of learner types as to encourage teachers to think about learner styles or preferences when they plan for activities in the classroom. In other words, get to know your students, become aware of their different learner styles — and try to go with the flow.

Question: You mentioned using drills. I'm a teacher-trainer working for a large company which uses in-house materials that consist mostly of drills. Though I am obliged to train teachers in how to use these materials, I do not think drills are adequate. I want to train my teachers in more communicative techniques, but I can't jettison the drills altogether. What should I do?
DC: The first thing to remember is that drills are not all bad. Although few now believe that they are the most effective way to teach or learn languages, that is not the same as saying they are entirely ineffective. Many of us present at this roundtable have been taught languages by teachers employing the audio-lingual method (and there is no method more dependent on drills), and guess what: we did learn! You don't need to feel, therefore, that in employing drills you are doing nothing for your students.
CP: That's true, but I suspect that students who manage to learn using drill-based methods do so by contextualizing and personalizing the language that is being drilled into them. Some students are unable to do this on their own, though, and that's where the teacher needs to step in and use drills in creative ways. Have one student, for example, be the teacher for the group. She gives the model sentence, has the group members repeat, and then gives the substitutions and the others in the group take turns. At the very least, this will dramatically increase the amount of time each student spends talking. If you have students working in groups of four, each member is talking one-fourth of the time, instead of only once or twice during the entire lesson.
DC: Yes, and since Japanese students are often familiar with drills, this is a good way of letting them do an activity with which they are comfortable, while at the same time introducing something with which they may be less familiar: groupwork.
CP: Remember, too, that the drills are not an end point in themselves. They should be seen as a stepping stone.
DC: Right. So even though you and the teachers you are training must employ drills, you don't have to use them as the whole class. Used as a part of each class they can be a way to introduce new structures and vocabulary which prepare students for more communicative activities to follow. I'm afraid you may find, however, that the teachers you train may resist employing more communicative methods because doing so will require more work on their parts than simply running through drills.
CP: One way to deal with that resistance is to encourage teachers to collaborate, thus spreading the additional work around — a sort of groupwork for teachers.

Question: How do you feel about allowing students to use their mother tongue in the classroom? Isn't there a danger that a teacher can become lazy and start explaining everything in the students' L1?

AK: It is essential that students be given the chance to struggle in the target language. So much learning occurs through negotiation of meaning. Being too quick to give explanations in the students' L1 robs students of opportunities to learn. On the other hand, if you are too insistent on always using the target language, you not only waste a lot of precious class time, but also deprive students of the rich cognitive resources which they have developed in their mother tongue.

I find the best thing to do is, on the first day of class, to ask the students what they want to do. Given the choice, most students prefer to use English in the English classroom. They want me to use English all the time, and only ask that they be allowed to use their L1 when they are absolutely stuck. I find that if I let the students establish their own rules, they are more likely to stick to them. It is important, though, that whatever rules the class agrees on are clearly laid out at the beginning.

GME: Ako is right when she says that given a choice, most students will prefer to use English in the classroom. There's nothing like being cool when one can speak another language fluently. The thing is, it's a long way before students can acquire that proficiency, and therefore, students tend to revert to their mother tongue. But speaking Japanese is itself a golden opportunity for the teacher to catch and rephrase in English. The teacher can then say, "This is how you say it in English. Now that you know, you can use it whenever you need it." I find that students will generally use the new phrase happily, especially when they need to use it often. But in order to reduce this kind of monitoring, it's also good to teach certain classroom vocabulary at the beginning of the semester which will help them slide into the English mode more easily. Don't forget that you can also prep the students with vocabulary needed for the intended discussion.

Comment: I generally agree, but I think, in some cases, if you don't spoon-feed the students, they starve.

AK: The question of how much L1 to allow in the classroom depends on many factors. You have to take into account, for example, the students' level, motivation, reasons for studying, age, and the size of the class. Some students will benefit from and appreciate the use of Japanese when grammatical structures or certain vocabulary items are explained. Other students will love the challenge of having everything explained in English. I think the important thing is not to let dogmas about L1 vs. L2 use limit the ways you respond to your students' needs.

SW: You need to keep in mind what the purpose of the lesson is. If giving and understanding instructions in English is the focus of your lesson, then do it in English. If the instructions are just a means of setting up another more important activity, the students' L1 may be appropriate. Using the L1 will allow you to get to the main focus of your lesson more quickly.

CP: Right, and for those of us who haven't yet mastered Japanese, using our less than perfect Japanese in our classrooms shows students that making mistakes in a second language is not the end of the world.

Question: I'm Japanese. Because the students know that, I find that it can be really difficult to get them to talk to me in English. How can I deal with a student who refuses to speak English to me?

AK: I'm also Japanese, and I entirely understand what you are saying. Actually, I once had a student tell me that when she talked to me in English, she felt intimidated. When she talked to me, she felt that I was just evaluating her English rather than really listening to what she was saying. I had to admit she had a point. When the teacher and student are both Japanese, using English with each other can feel totally contrived; the sense of real communication can be lost.

I don't think, though, that it is impossible for Japanese teachers to create a classroom atmosphere in which students can enjoy communicating in English. Some students even enjoy speaking English with Japanese teachers. For these students it's like a game. It's very important for the teacher, however, to set the tone of the class from the first day, and again, I'd say the best way to do this is by having a discussion with your students about what they want.

Question: I teach a small group class in which

there is a doctor who is quite eminent and also older than the other members of the group. He intimidates the other members of the group, and the truth is, he intimidates me, too. What should I do to ensure equal speaking time for all members of the group?
DC: On a fundamental level, remember that you are the teacher, and that teachers in this society are vested with a certain amount of power and respect. You have the authority to tell the doctor — with all due courtesy and respect — to shut up.
CP: On a more practical level you can use groupwork techniques to manage the amount each student speaks. For example, give each student a token of some sort. In order to talk, the student must "spend" their token. Having spent his or her token, the student cannot speak again until all the other students have spent their tokens. Once that happens, all students retrieve their tokens from the center of the table, and the discussion proceeds. This technique not only assures that loudmouths don't dominate, but also provides incentives for quiet students to speak. Because the aggressive students are impatient for their turn to come around again, they encourage more quiet students to take their turns.
GME: My particular remedy is to have a timer that will beep when it's time to stop. But you know, what can be a problem here can actually be turned into something positive. This doctor, you have to admit, is an exceptional student — he's talking! Here we are practically on our knees asking students to say something in English, and when one finally does, we want him to shut up. Usually, dominant speakers can be great leaders. You can make such dominant members of the group work for you by asking them to be leaders, whose main task is to elicit information from each and every member of his group, and then ask him to summarize what went on in the discussion. He will love the esteem that comes with being a leader — and won't mind the responsibilities connected with it. You can then sit in your chair and relax instead of playing police.

Question: When doing pairwork, should I be concerned about pairs of unequal ability?
DC: Well, unequal pairs can be a positive thing. In unequal pairs, the more able student can teach his or her partner, and in so doing help each of them to learn. In fact, though it won't always be the more able student doing the teaching. All learners know something that other learners don't, so all will have an opportunity to be the teacher.

Having said that, one probably doesn't want to have students in unequal pairs all the time. It is also nice for two advanced students to get together and fly, as well as for less advanced students to work with someone who is comfortable with a slower pace. For this reason, one should change pairs often, even several times in one class.
CP: You need to be careful, though, about how pairs or groups are formed. If students are allowed to form their own groups, they'll work with their friends, and in doing so, they may not stay focused on the task. Also, students who are less popular, or perceived as "bad," may be left out.

With regard to groups, in the field of cooperative learning, mixed groups are considered ideal. Having one high proficiency student, one low proficiency student, and two that fall somewhere in the middle is recommended. You do have to take care, though, to structure your tasks in such a way that each group member will have to participate. You can't give the low proficiency learners the chance to tune out— or the higher students the chance to ignore their groupmates.

Question: I have a real problem with students coming in late. What should I do?
SW: The teacher must make it clear from the start what is expected of students. The prevalent notion, at least at college and university level, is that students are not expected to show up for class on time, and you cannot really blame students for believing that your class too will be run on these premises. You have to make it clear, therefore, that it is not going to be allowed.

If the teacher makes it clear that being late is not acceptable, will not be tolerated, and will affect their grade in the course, then students will not be late. One way of doing this is "three strikes and you're out." If the student is not in his or her seat by the time roll is called then that student is absent. If a student is absent three times, he or she fails the class — period! Students will tend

not to take such systems seriously at first, so the teacher has to keep reminding them that they'd better learn to. It's usually enough to comment as you are taking roll, "Only one more for Taro and he's out." Students quickly come to understand that you are not kidding.

Of course there are other systems for getting students to show up on time. One can, for example, give students points for attendance. If a student has less than X amount of attendance then that is ten percent off his or her total score for the year. If a student has less than X amount of attendance, then that is minus twenty percent, and so on.

CP: What I do is simple. If they are more than fifteen minutes late for a class they are considered absent. Four absences in a semester — or seven for a full-year course — and they fail. The details, however, of the system are not that important. The important thing is to have a clear policy, explain that policy from the beginning, and to stick to it.

Another way I encourage students to show up on time is to spend the first fifteen minutes of each class on student speeches. Each week several students have to give speeches which count for about ten percent of their grades. If they are late, they may miss their chance to speak, and this could, I make clear to them, affect their final grade dramatically.

Question: Is getting a Master's degree worth it?

DC: If you don't plan to stay in teaching, there is no reason to spend the time, energy and money it takes to get a Master's degree. If, on the other hand, you are a career teacher then a Master's degree is indispensable.

CP: I strongly agree. Getting a Master's was the most important move in my teaching career. Not only did it allow me to move from conversation school and vocational school teaching to the university level, but it improved my teaching skills dramatically. Yes, it's definitely worth it.

DC: Yes, and on a more mundane level, if one wants to teach at a college or university in Japan, and increasingly at other types of institutions as well, a Master's degree is a basic requirement. Also, to get in the door at most Japanese colleges and universities you have to have contacts, and particularly if you do your Master's in Japan, you will make those sorts of contacts in your program.

GME: If nothing else there is always the confidence that one gains when one has completed a graduate degree — confidence as a teacher, confidence as a lesson planner, confidence that what you are doing will benefit the students' language learning.

Question: Yes, but isn't what one learns in a Master's program too theoretical to be of use to working teachers?

SW: It's true they're not going to teach you things like how to erase the blackboard. You're still going to have to think for yourself and come up with lesson plans on your own. You will, though, acquire the tools which will enable you to do this in a more principled fashion. Actually, a lot of people who are initially hostile to what they call "theory" learn to see the point of it as they proceed toward their degree.

GME: Really, in a Master's program it's not all theory. Some assignments will actually require you to develop communicative activities that will be relevant to your particular teaching situation, which will help you make informed decisions of what will work best for you in the classroom. You will actually be more in control of your teaching, you'll feel better about it, and you will end up doing a better job!

DC: And, with that thought we'll bring this roundtable to a close. We'd like to thank the audience for participating and for their thoughtful and insightful questions. If there is anyone who didn't get a chance to ask their question or who would like to further question any of the panel members, we'd be more than happy to talk to you outside as soon as we finish here. Thank you again for coming, and enjoy the rest of the conference.

Footnote

1 Willing, K. (1987). *Learning styles and adult migrant education*. Adelaide: National Curriculum Resource Centre.

What Makes a Good Language Lesson? (Part 2)

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This poster reported on the findings of an on-going research project which examines the concept which teachers and students in Japan have of "a good language lesson."

The first part of the project asked 572 students at a wide variety of schools to write about the best English lesson they had ever had. A content-analysis of their responses was presented at JALT95 (Ryan, 1996).

This second part of the project, which used the same methodology, asked a similar question to language teachers working in Japan. It attempts to identify similarities and differences in the views of students and their teachers on this subject.

This is done not in the belief that good teaching consists in giving students exactly what they want, nor in bending them entirely to the will of the teacher but from a conviction that teaching should be based on an appreciation of as many of the factors that come together in the classroom as possible, especially those on which students and teachers differ.

Previous studies

There has been a flurry of articles examining the views on various aspects of language education held by college students in Japan (Hadley & Hadley, 1996; Redfield, 1995; Shimizu, 1995; Durham and Ryan, 1992), but far fewer dealing with those of their teachers. Presumably this is at least in part due to the difficulties of obtaining responses from a meaningfully large sample of teachers.

In Hong Kong, Richards, Tung and Ng have reported on the beliefs and attitudes of teachers in in-service training but focussed mainly on the ideological levels of philosophy, method and approach (1992).

The only (fairly) large scale study of teachers conducted recently in Japan appears to be Sasaki's (1996) survey of 81 native-speaking English teachers. Sasaki focussed on the teachers' attitudes to the classroom behaviour of their Japanese students and reports a mismatch between teachers' expectations and students' behaviour.

The survey

A questionnaire was drawn up asking teachers to respond in writing to the following question:

- What are the elements of your "ideal lesson," the kind of lesson you aim to teach to your students (although you may not always succeed)?
- While the lesson should be ideal, the students you imagine teaching it to should be your own.
- Please be as detailed as possible.

Respondents were also asked to provide some basic demographic information.

The research question was left deliberately open (some might say vague) in order to avoid pre-judging the answers by suggesting that they might involve certain categories. The students surveyed in the first part of the project had been asked a slightly more concrete question ("Think of the best English lesson you have ever had. What was good about it? What made it different from other English lessons?") which was thought to be more appropriate to their level of maturity. The more abstract question was used with the teachers on the assumption that, with a wider experience of different teaching situations than the

students, they would be more able to extrapolate the elements of an ideal lesson.

Questionnaires were distributed to teachers in Japan by the following means: given to those showing an interest in the poster presentation of student data at JALT95; sent to members of JALT's CUE N-SIG who had agreed to participate in questionnaire research; handed or e-mailed to friends and colleagues and posted on the JALT CALL electronic-mail list for answers off-list.

The responses were analysed to extract the elements of a good lesson which they mentioned. If, for example, a response said: "A good lesson would have motivated students paying attention to the teacher," it was read as one mention of motivated students and one mention of attentiveness.

As more responses were analysed, the list of elements grew longer and it was possible to group some of them under headings such as "Goals," "Atmosphere" and "Materials." This grouping was done in order to make a long list of elements digestible for consumers of the results and is not intended to suggest that the teachers themselves would have grouped their responses in this way.

No attempt was made to force the responses into similar categories to those which emerged from the data collected from students in the previous study.

Sample

Responses were received from 54 teachers. Since only one of them was a native speaker of Japanese, it was decided to focus the study on the 53 who were native speakers of English teaching their own language. Thus the survey dealt exclusively with the views of foreign teachers. This was not the intention at the outset but a result of the lack of responses from Japanese teachers.

They were teaching in the following kinds of schools:

University:	24
Junior College:	10
University and Junior College:	8
Various (including Company, language school, *senmongakko*):	9
No answer:	2

Results

With such a small sample, it was decided to treat all the teachers as one group rather than looking for differences between the responses of, say, university teachers and *senmongakko* teachers.

The elements of a good lesson mentioned by more than one teacher are tabulated below with figures showing how many respondents mentioned each element.

Elements of a good lesson mentioned by more than one teacher

Element	# of teachers
Goals	
students learn something new	5
student-autonomy	3
achieve goals	2
sense of accomplishment for students	2
meet needs of all students	2
students leave happy	2
students leave feeling they learnt sthg.	2
improve students' self-esteem	2
improvement in students' language use	2
students to learn one/two items per lesson	2
Approach	
student-centred	5
Lesson-planning considerations	
classes fit together in a series	5
variety of activities	4
movement	4

time for students to reflect	3
pace fast enough to maintain interest	2
small class	2
well-planned	2
Lesson components	
warm-up	6
homework	5
review	4
summary	2
preview next lesson	2
What is taught	
useable/useful English	5
Materials/Content	
interesting to students	8
textbook	7
video	5
personal topics	4
appropriate to students' level	3
interesting to teacher	3
selected by students	2
social topics	2
tapes	2
Class activities	
pairwork	16
group work	10
role-play	6
songs	3
real-life activities	3
information gap task	3
students make dialogues	3
drills	3
drama activities	2
timed activities	2
quizzes	2
student presentations	2
discussion	2
Teacher activities	
does not correct too much	4
helps/corrects students	4
acts as a facilitator	3
monitors students	3
talks very little	2
prepares well	2
Student Activities	
interact in English	15
speak English	7
prepare well	4
speak out/ask questions	4
monitor/correct themselves	4
know purpose of lesson	3
know and use classroom language	2
answer questions	2
listen a lot	2
Student attitude	
well motivated	3

interested in lesson	2
interested in learning	2
interested in teacher	2
Atmosphere	
students fully engaged in lesson	17
fun	8
interesting for students	5
challenge	5
good humour	4
excitement	4
"Aha!" moments	3
lively	3
respect for all	3
good teacher-student rapport	3
sense of wonder/magic	3
students feel free to speak	2
students do not want to leave	2

To a large extent the table speaks for itself: the teachers surveyed would like to see their students fully engaged and interacting in English, mainly in pairwork and groupwork activities, using materials that interest the students, in a fun atmosphere. There is less consensus in other categories but a general recognition that an ideal lesson would have a goal (or goals) and that teachers should consider the ordering of activities in the lesson plan.

Although student-centredness is espoused explicitly by only 5 of the respondents, it is implicit in many of the other elements mentioned. There is concern that students should be interested both in the materials used and in the lessons themselves. The most popular of the classroom activities (pair-work, group-work, role-play) require a lot of student involvement. The long list of student activities contrasts with the limited number of teacher activities, many of which are negative (do not correct too much, do not talk too much). Indeed, few of the activities suggested for the teacher fit a traditional model of "teacherliness": the teacher is seen here as a planner, a facilitator and a monitor of student-centred activities.

This, of course, puts the onus on students to provide the centre around which the ideal lesson revolves. It is not surprising, then, that the single most common response was that students should be fully engaged in the lesson. Since the common perception is that Japanese education tends to be teacher-centred to a fault, it would be interesting to know how far this desire for student-centredness is a reaction by the teachers to the situation in which they find themselves.

Comparison with student preferences

The analysis of student responses to the previous survey concluded: "students like to learn practical English in small conversation classes taught by foreign teachers using videos in a fun atmosphere with games and explanations that are easy to understand" (Ryan, 1996, p. 118). While this is not incompatible with the student-centred approach favoured by the teachers, it does suggest a difference in priorities.

The following table shows elements mentioned by both teachers and students. For ease of comparison, the number of respondents mentioning an element is expressed as a percentage of the total number of respondents to each survey.

Element	Teachers (%) n =53	Students (%) n = 572
fun	15.1	15.6
video	9.4	9.9
small class	3.8	4.2
useable/useful English	9.4	7.5
tapes	3.8	1.4
quizzes	3.8	1.6
songs	5.7	3.1
discussion	3.8	1.2
sense of accomplishment for students	3.8	1.0
drama activities	3.8	0.3
students prepare well	7.5	0.3
interesting	9.4	1.0
students speak English	13.2	2.3
role-play	11.3	0.3
group work	18.9	1.2
pairwork	30.2	1.0

The strongest areas of agreement seem to be that lessons should be fun, involve small classes and teach useful English and on specific classroom activities or materials. However, the elements on which there is agreement account for only 8.6% of all the elements mentioned by the two groups of respondents. Whole categories of elements mentioned by one group are ignored by the other: students say nothing about lesson goals, approach or (less surprisingly) lesson-planning; teachers do not mention the manner in which instructions should be given to students (a topic on which 10.0% of the students express an opinion).

While this is suggestive of huge differences in the priorities of teachers and students, it is important not to read too much into it at this stage of the research project. Some of the differences are expected: whilst the personality of the teacher is an important variable for the student, it is a constant for a teacher asked to write about a lesson taught by him or herself. Some are matters of semantics: a teacher writing about "helping and correcting students" and a student saying the teacher should correct students' pronunciation probably have very similar ideas on this point but, since they are not exactly the same, it is not possible to conflate them for analysis.

Most importantly, the research methodology employed so far will not allow us to understand if an element is not mentioned because it is not thought to be important or because it is so obvious that it, literally, "goes without saying."

Obviously, a further round of research is needed to overcome these problems. In the third stage, students and teachers will be asked to react to the same list of elements of a good lesson drawn from the first two parts of this project. It is hoped that firmer conclusions can be drawn from the third, comparative, stage of the research.

Conclusion

This second part of the research project has looked at the elements foreign teachers in Japan consider to be part of an ideal language lesson. Although only a small number of teachers responded to the survey, it is possible to discern a predilection for student-centred approaches. How far this is compatible with the preferences of Japanese students is a question which will be explored further in the third stage of this project.

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Understanding Instructions Survey: Less Anxiety, More Interaction

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Introduction

Action research is one way to try to solve classroom problems (LoCastro, 1994, p. 5). When I began an action research project in September 1995, I had a problem. Students in my novice-level freshman conversation class and I felt anxiety during instructions. There was one activity in particular which helped reduce anxiety during this project (Kindt, in press). It was a survey that introduced students to possible ways to understand instructions. In this paper, I would like to present a revision of this survey and show how action research can result in practical applications.

The "What Do You Do to Understand?" Survey

A list of possible techniques (or ways) students might use to help understand instructions became the basis of the fifteen-item survey. When I introduce the survey to a class, I first familiarize students with the words below:

explanation	説明
explain	説明する
watch	見る
examples	例
gesture	ジェスチャー
handout	プリント
demonstrations	手本
carefully	注意して
writing	書くこと
activity	課題
pictures	絵、図
partner	ペア
drawings	絵、図
dictionary	辞書
real	本物
wait	待っている

1 I _____ listen to the teacher's explanation.
2 I _____ watch the teacher's gesture, body language or demonstrations.
3 I _____ read the teacher's writing, pictures or drawings on the board.
4 I _____ look at any real things the teacher shows us.
5 I _____ ask the teacher to explain again.
6 I _____ ask the teacher for examples.
7 I _____ read the handout or textbook carefully.
8 I _____ watch what other students are doing or their demonstration.
9 I _____ ask my classmates to explain in English.
10 I _____ ask my classmates for examples in English.

11 I _____ just try the activity by myself, with a partner or in a group

Then I explain how to complete the survey by writing either "never," "sometimes," "often," "usually," or "always" on the blanks. A colleague suggested doing the survey as interviews to make it a communicative activity. Whatever the case, students should complete the survey thinking especially of their English classes with foreign teachers:

12 I _____ look in a dictionary.
13 I _____ ask the teacher to explain in Japanese.
14 I _____ ask my classmates to explain in Japanese.
15 I _____ do nothing and wait for the teacher to come and help me.

Survey on ways of understanding teachers' instructions

After collecting the surveys, I calculated a relative frequency of response for each item. I assigned values (never=0, sometimes=1, often=2, usually=3 and always=4) and calculated the average.

I will comment on two classes I taught this year (1996), a novice Freshman Class and a class of International Communication students who studied abroad for a year. I will also include the results of all 117 students from ten different classes participating in the survey.

The results varied greatly from class to class but showed a tendency towards three ranges—high (2.6+), mid (2.5-1.5), and low (below1.4). For example, in Figure1 items 1, 3, 2, and 7 are high, items 14, 12, 4, 8, 11, 5 and 13 are mid, and 6, 15, 9, and 10 are low range items. The only surprise in the high range is item 7, "I _____ read the handout or textbook carefully," which is typically mid-range. Scoring 3.1 might show that the Freshman Class gets more security out of written instructions. In the mid-range, item 5 at 1.8, "I _____ ask the teacher to explain again," may shows students' hesitation to take active roles in the class. This same item scored higher with the International students (2.1) and lower with the general student body (1.5).

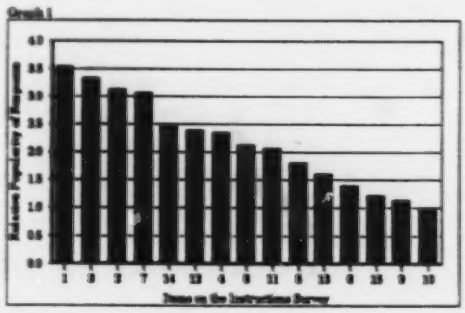

Figure 1: Freshman Class Results

When we look at Figure 2 (see page 3), from students with classroom experience abroad, items 1, 3, 4 and 2 might be expected in the high range. But item 11, "I _____ just try the activity by myself, with a partner or in a group," could be at 2.6 due to a greater level of motivation, confidence or initiative. Both the Freshman Class and general population scored only 2.1. An expected result from the International students was item 13, "I _____ ask the teacher to explain in Japanese." At 0.5, this was far lower than the collective score of 1.5.

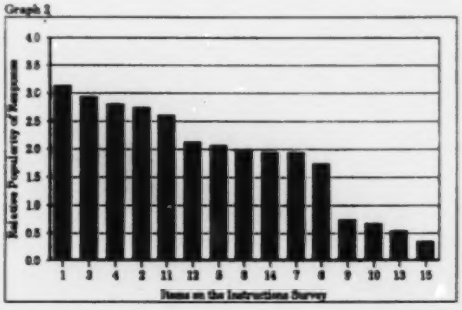

Figure 2: International Communication Class Results

Figure 3 shows the results of all 117 responses,though I think that this information is quite far removed from the reality of each individual classroom.

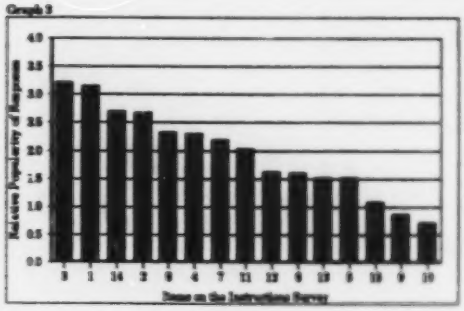

Figure 3: All Surveyed Students Results

There were, however, some interesting results to consider. Item 14, "I _____ ask my classmates to explain in Japanese," scored in the high range (2.7). It is easy to believe that asking classmates in Japanese is quite common for the student population in general, though the International students scored only 1.9. Item 12, "I _____ look in a dictionary," was low for all students (1.6), but both the Freshman and International students scored higher (2.4 and 2.1 respectively). I can only guess that this shows the effects of individual differences among classes and ultimately, among individuals.

Of course, the most important result for mé was that the anxiety never returned. After giving the survey to a class, I felt so confident that I sometimes gave handouts without any verbal instructions at all. They had to ask me how to complete it. Even this increased emphasis on student responsibility resulted in an enjoyable lesson.

The accompanying questionnaire

One of the drawbacks of the original survey was that I never asked students directly if they thought doing the survey reduced anxiety. So after consulting with colleagues, I decided to write a four-item questionnaire to accompany the survey (see Appendix). This asked students to give their reactions to the survey and make predictions.

The first item, "Circle the [items] you were aware of...," was included in hopes that students would more deeply reflect on the items and their own style of interaction with their teachers. The second, "How do you feel when you don't understand...," would give us an idea of how our students are reacting when they are unable to understand. The possible initial responses, like "Perplexed or unhappy" (with Japanese translation; see Appendix), avoided the use of close synonyms to get students to think more deeply about the choices and not choose indiscriminately (Cholewinski, in press).

Perplexed or unhappy
Shy or embarrassed
Anxious or uncomfortable
Nothing special
Other _____

After checking one of the above items, students were asked to briefly explain. Again, this helped students to provide a more thoughtful response.

The third item asks students to predict whether knowing these items will help them, and the fourth whether they will try to use them consciously in the future. A word of caution: I think that students would not consciously use each of these items. That would, as one student responded, "make (them) act unnaturally." I think the awareness that these possibilities exist and can be employed at any time is the benefit.

The following are selected examples of responses from the Freshman Class and International Communication Class. These comments gave me a much better understanding of students' attitudes towards anxiety during instructions than the original survey. I think they speak well for themselves (errors remain as written):

2 How do you feel when you don't understand a teacher's instructions immediately?

Freshman Class

- Perplexed or unhappy. "I wanna take part in class."
- Perplexed or unhappy. "When I confuse, I regret."

- Anxious or uncomfortable. "I feel uncomfortable, I don't know what is doing."
- Other. "Mortifying. I mortifying that I don't understand teacher's say thing."

International Communication Class

- Perplexed or Unhappy. "Because I sometimes can't ask the teacher again."
- Perplexed or Unhappy. "Because in spite of studying English in England, I can't understand."
- Nothing Special. "Because I think that I can ask teacher, "Could you tell me again?" after he/she said."
- Other. "want to know it. Because if I can't understand it I'm going to be perplexed, so I want to avoid to be perplexed."

3 Do you think that being aware of these ways will make you feel more relaxed?

Freshman Class

- Yes. "I don't feel uncomfortable when I know many ways to understand."
- Yes. "If I understand all of your said. I'm very fun and happy."
- Yes. "If I understand teacher saids, next reaction is easy."
- Yes. "I can teach to my friends."

International Communication Class

- Yes. "Of cause, If I know these ways, I can easy to understand what I should do."
- Yes. "If it is so, I can join the class more."
- Maybe. "Each teacher has different way of teaching, so if I can understand their teaching style, maybe I can understand the class more."
- I don't know. "If I know many ways to understand the teacher's instructions, I know their instructions are bad."

4 Will you try to use them in your classes?

Freshman Class

- Yes. "Because, be myself."
- Yes. "So I can understand always."
- Yes. "I already doing the ways to understand."
- I don't know. "I'm very shy."

International Communication Class

- Yes. "I want to learn more easily."
- Yes. "If I know these ways, I'm not be nervous."
- Maybe. "Because depends on situation."
- I don't know. "It's very difficult to get used to their teaching style because I got a different style. Maybe I can try."

Conclusion

A great deal of time could be spent analyzing the deeper meanings of the survey results or criticizing the survey questions, procedures or usefulness. It is also clear that different applications of this survey are literally endless. But the most important result of this revised version was that in my classes, and hopefully in other classes as well, students and teachers could feel less anxious during instructions. I attribute this positive result in part to a greater awareness of what is possible during instructions and to the benefits of conducting action research.

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Appendix
The Accompanying Questionnaire

·Read the questions carefully and then answer in detail. Please use English if possible.
質問をよく読んで、できるだけくわしく答えてください。なるべく英語で書くこと。

1 Look at the list of ways to understand teachers' instructions. Circle the ones you were aware of before today's activity.
先生の指示を理解するための方法のリストを見て、今日の課題の前に、自分がわかっていたものに丸をつけなさい。

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

2 How do you feel when you don't understand a teacher's instructions immediately?
先生の指示がすぐに理解できない時、どう思いますか？

- Perplexed or unhappy 混乱する; 悲しい
- Shy or embarrassed 恥ずかしい
- Anxious or uncomfortable 不安
- Nothing special 別に何も感じない
- Other その他

Could you briefly explain your answer? 簡単に理由を書いて下さい。

3 There are many ways to understand teachers' instructions. Do you think being aware of these ways will make you feel more relaxed and comfortable during instructions?
先生の指示を理解するには色々な方法があります。それらの方法を知っていると授業中もっとリラックスできたり気楽になったりできると思いますか？

- Yes はい
- No いいえ
- Maybe たぶんできる
- I don't know わからない
- Other その他

Could you briefly explain your answer? 簡単に理由を書いて下さい。

4 Now that you are more aware of the ways to understand teachers' instructions, will you try to use them in your classes?
先生の指示を理解するための様々な方法を学んだ今、これからそれらの方法を授業中に使ってみようと思いますか？

- Yes はい
- No いいえ
- Maybe たぶんできる
- I don't know わからない
- Other その他

Could you briefly explain your answer? 簡単に理由を書いて下さい。

How Students Account for their Poor English Skills

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Among my colleagues and friends who teach English conversation classes at the college level, a commonly heard complaint from their students is "This is supposed to be a conversation class, but there isn't any conversation in this class." Upon hearing this, you scratch your head and think to yourself, "That's funny. My job title clearly states Instructor of English Conversation, and that's what I've been teaching every week for the past year. I am schooled in ESL theory and I believe and practice the communicative approach. I do pair-work and group-work activities and have stocked up on the general tools of the trade. So, how can the students say I haven't been teaching them conversation? What do they really mean when they say this? After getting over the initial feelings of bafflement (and, yes, some annoyance), I began to ask myself, "What do students mean by lack of conversation? Are they unhappy about their own lack of oral production or that of their classmates? Were they really dissatisfied because their perceptions of a conversation class were not met or was this simply a blanket excuse to complain about other underlying problems they experienced in the class?"

The objective of the study is to investigate the basis of the abovementioned complaint by examining how college students perceive and assess their English conversation classes. To what or to whom do the students attribute their difficulties in acquiring oral English? It is a cliche to say that, in general, Japanese students are passive in the classroom. The other commonly heard statement is that Japanese are shy. Too often these cultural traits are used as excuses for students' failure to learn and speak English. What exactly do they mean when they say they are shy? They certainly do not act that way outside of the classroom. Why are they so passive? Are they really bored and disinterested? Is it too difficult for them? Or are there other factors involved in making them passive in the classroom? In my research I attempt to answer some of these questions by eliciting specific reasons why some students seem to have such a difficult time in English conversation classes.

The Students

A total of 189 junior college and university students were represented in the study. At the junior college the students were first and second year English conversation class female students. At the university the students were first, second, and third year English conversation class male and female students. A majority were English majors who were required to enroll in English conversation courses. The students at the junior college were leveled according to their abilities based on an oral exam administered at the beginning of the academic year. At the university the students were grouped according to their homeroom. Analysis of the data did not reveal any significant differences in student attitudes. The fact that the junior college was single sex and the university coed did result in some differences in relation to classroom dynamics, which I interpreted as basically positive. Male and female students often engage in self-segregation in the classroom, with male students sitting on one side of the room and female students sitting

on the opposite side. But when randomly paired together to complete tasks, they were actually quite active and productive. There were also some differences in opinions between students in first, second, and third year conversation classes, but in most cases I attribute these differences more to personality within each class rather than year of students.

Method

The scope of my research was accomplished through the collection of data utilizing class evaluations, information culled from informal interviews with students, and observation of the classes in the course of the semester. The main part of the evaluation consisted of a questionnaire. Five areas in which students were to evaluate their experiences and level of satisfaction with their English conversation classes were included: (1) classroom atmosphere; (2) the textbook; (3) the handouts; (4) the instructor; and (5) the students themselves. Within each area were specific questions. In the area of classroom atmosphere, students were asked to state their opinions about the size of the class, pace of the lessons, attitude of classmates, etc. Regarding the textbook and handouts, students were asked to assess the interest, content, and difficulty levels of the materials. The instructor was evaluated based on the speed, volume, clarity, and level of her speech and explanations. The demeanor and attitude of the instructor towards her students and teaching were also evaluated. In the category of students they were instructed to answer questions concerning their study habits and efforts inside and outside of the classroom. The second part of the evaluation consisted of the ranking of five items related to learning English: (1) the school curriculum; (2) the text; (3) the teacher; (4) classmates; and (5) student motivation. Students were instructed to rank the five items from one to five, one being the most important factor in learning English and five being the least important factor in learning English based on their own opinions and experiences. The third part of the evaluation was self-explanatory and consisted of four open-ended questions: "I like English because ... "; "I don't like English because ..."; "English is difficult because ..."; and "The best way to learn English is ..." The fourth part of the evaluation was optional. Students were given the opportunity to express additional comments and opinions if they wished in English or Japanese.

Analysis

The results of the questionnaire produced some obvious answers to why students have difficulty in an English conversation class and why they complain that there is no conversation (see Appendix). The majority of the students lack the necessary vocabulary in order to engage in meaningful dialogue because they seldom review what they learned in class. Rather than building a repertoire of new vocabulary words and useful phrases every week in order to help them improve, the students are basically at the same starting point every week. An analogy would be running in place—you expend the energy but you don't go anywhere. The students come to class and bring their textbooks. But their failure to review and utilize what they learn from week to week holds them back and keeps them at the same spot. The fact that most students felt it was adequate having English conversation only once a week also indicate that they do not understand what it takes to acquire a foreign language. (Cogan, 1995) They complain that they do not have the opportunity to utilize English and, therefore, cannot improve their skills, yet do not see the irony in not wanting to have more classes per week. Their expectations are unrealistic considering their lack of effort and initiative. Although they realize that the key to success in learning English involves practice and self-motivation, the results of the questionnaire suggest that many do not apply them in their English conversation classes (see Appendix).

In the ranking section of the evaluation, students overwhelmingly indicated that the instructor and self-motivation were the most important factors in acquiring English. Surprisingly, the importance assigned to their own classmates ranked consistently last in their assessment suggesting the importance students place on the vertical

relationship between instructor and student in contrast to the horizontal relationship between student and student. Text and curriculum ranked equally low.

However, when asked to complete open-ended questions, the answers revealed that for many students the classroom atmosphere and the role of other students did have a significant bearing on whether they performed well in class. (Larsen-Freeman, 1991) Some of the students' fears in speaking up were directly linked to their self-consciousness regarding other students in the class. This included the perceived attitudes of other students in the class, lack of close friends, lack of teamwork, and the passivity of other students. The students themselves may not view and realize how important other students are in their language learning process, but as their answers reveal, other students were indeed directly related to whether they performed and utilized language in class and thus in learning English (see Appendix).

Most students reported that they held favorable opinions toward the instructor. Yet despite their positive perceptions of the instructor and overall positive attitudes about the class, these did not automatically promote active language acquisition.

Educational Implications

Clearly the classroom environment, specifically student dynamics, plays a very important role in English language learning in Japan. As evidenced in this study, students explicitly blamed themselves for lack of effort and motivation in studying and learning English. Equally blamed, though implicitly, are other students in the class who detract from the learning environment by not being active, being too quiet, and failing to foster a friendly atmosphere conducive to learning. (Hoekje, 1993) The words nervous and shy appear frequently when students try to explain why they cannot learn English. A better word to describe their feelings is fear, — fear of making mistakes in front of others, fear of outdoing others, basically a fear of standing out especially if they do not know the other people very well. Classes where students get along with each other naturally show a higher participation rate. I have observed that second year students are sometimes more relaxed with each other and show more willingness to engage in conversation. Some students also seem to show an improvement in their attitude and performance during the second semester.

Other students set the tone and determine the atmosphere of the class, more so than the teacher. The students' passivity is influenced and governed by their classmates. The students may follow instructions given by the instructor, but it is the subtle cues from their classmates that play a stronger role in regulating their classroom behavior. It is our responsibility as instructors to recognize this situation. Instructors should be aware of the implicit as well as the explicit messages in the classroom. In order to produce a truly effective environment for language learning, students should be made aware that interactions between students are equally, if not more important, than interactions between teacher and students. This is not always an easy task but an understanding and awareness of these implicit messages will serve to guide the instructor when trying to create a classroom conducive to learning and fostering and nurturing positive attitudes in the classroom.

To respond to the students' claim that there is no English conversation in an English conversation class, — it's not that there is no talking in class. Rather, the students' expectations about what constitutes conversation are different from what they actually experience in class. Students are traumatized by exam English and so regard any formalized fashion of studying English with suspicion. (Nunan, 1993) This would explain their desire for conversation, specifically free talk. I would interpret this as reactionary emotional resistance - choosing a learning style completely different from what they had known, dreaded, and hated. Free talk ideally has no rules or parameters. It is spontaneous, and most important of all, natural. When students say they want English conversation, it is this natural and spontaneous free flow of ideas and information for which they are hoping. However, in order to engage in a conversation, even a basic one, students must acquire the necessary grammar and

vocabulary. This can only be achieved through practice and effort. In a typical conversation class there is controlled practice leading to free practice. Students do not seem to appreciate the necessity of the controlled practice and reject it as boring and not "real" English. Students have to realize that learning English is not always fun and games. It requires work. Students should also realize the importance of student-student interactions because learning a language is a social, interactive process. (Toms, 1994) Teachers are facilitators. As facilitators we can help students learn by giving them support and guidance. We are not there to learn for them.

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Appendix

(1) Some Responses to Open-Ended Questions

I like this class because ...	It's a friendly class. I have friends in the class. I can learn with friends. It is a pleasant class. The students are positive. I have many friends. I like to speak with other students.
I don't like this class because ...	It's not active. It is a quiet class. Some students not positive and active. Strangers are in the class. Other students are not positive. No friends in the class. Not a friendly class. Classmates are not friends. Not everyone tries to use English often. No teamwork. Group work. No discussion.

(2) Some Highlights of the Questionnaire

- 61% reported that they would like to have class only once a week.
- 49% reported that 90 minute classes are too long.
- Although a majority reported coming to class every week, bringing their textbooks and being punctual,
- 59% never prepared before class and an overwhelming
- 73% never reviewed the lesson after class.
- 28% reported that they do not even try to use English during class.
- 48% reported being active in class sometimes, rarely, or never.
- 46% reported that they sometimes, rarely, or never worked hard in class.

Exploring Teacher Education Through Video

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Teacher isolation is a real issue facing every teacher in every classroom. Whether or not we have daily contact with other teachers of our subject, most of us want more opportunities to talk with other professionals about ideas and work with them on practical issues of classroom teaching. We want more input and interaction regarding our teaching. As an institution that provides English language services at client sites around Japan, we face the physical reality that teachers will generally be teaching at the same time of day in quite separate locations. Few opportunities for either peer-observation, or team-teaching exist for our teachers. Yet each of you to a certain extent, share these forces of isolation—whether you are a part-time instructor working at several institutions, part of a tiny minority of English teachers at a larger institution, or simply have a tight schedule! This lack of teacher-teacher classroom interaction mandates a new approach to teacher development. Our approach has been teacher development through video. In this article we will cover our rationale and goals, the groundwork for the project, a description of the workshops, and finally feedback and reflections on this project.

Rationale and goals

We began with the idea that teachers should direct their own "development," as opposed to receiving "training," using Freemans (1982) definitions. This is not to say that more structured "training" is not part of the broader "education" program at our institution — it is. This project, however, was designed to allow teachers to find their own roles and directions as teaching professionals. Yet, this very concept of development became our first hurdle. Julian Edge states:

> Here we are close to the heart of a paradox. When I use the word development, I always mean self-development. But that cant be done in isolation. Self-development needs other people: colleagues and students. By cooperating with others, we can come to understand better our own experiences and opinions. (1992, pp. 3-4)

From an institutional point of view, we can easily mandate the time, we can express our steadfast belief that continuing development is essential to the teachers as a group and as individuals as well as to the institution, and we can provide the money and the scheduling to facilitate such a project. Ultimately, teachers must choose their own course of growth, or there will not be any growth. "Teacher Development is no different from personal development, and as such can only be self-initiated, self-directed, and self-evaluated" (Underhill, 1992, p. 79). From the point of view of the teachers, attending mandatory training sessions is entirely different from modifying ones paradigms for continuing professional development. It is deeper, and personally valid; therefore, we chose to keep training sessions on a paid voluntary basis. Following the suggestions of Nunan (1992) and Underhill (1992), our goal as workshop facilitators was to create a climate of trust and support in which individuals could discover a means of developing as teachers. That climate, in turn, would make continuing development, dialogue, and professionalism standard. The rest of the paper will consider how we conducted this project, and what the results were.

Groundwork

We began with the results of a teacher survey indicating the teaching staff felt a need for more opportunities for teacher education, and that some teachers would like to observe each others' classes more often to share ideas and to learn from each other. The administration is keen to improve teaching quality, and sees increased teacher education as one way to achieve this. Serendipitously, efforts to improve feedback to learners had led us to purchase seven video cameras to record classroom activities for revision and awareness.

Before finalizing the format of teacher development workshops, we resurveyed our teachers regarding their enthusiasm, attitudes, and interest. Teachers commented on previous teacher training or development. They were also asked whether educational change tends to be administration led or teacher led, and which they thought might be more effective. Bottom-up change seemed to be superior to us, based on Nunan (1989), Webb (1992), and Gul (1993), but we were interested in what our instructors thought. Teachers that responded agreed upon two broad concepts and that agreement seemed unrelated to qualifications or teaching experience:

- educational change comes from joint administrative/teacher initiatives (in contradiction to our background research)
- interaction with teachers is the best way to develop as teachers (in agreement with our background research)

A final question of whether teachers could help each other by only listening produced a mixed response. Some saw an opportunity for idea or activity exchange. Others felt simply listening was unlikely to achieve anything, and additional idea sharing and constructive criticism would be needed to hone their own views. A small number pointed out the value of verbalizing thoughts to clarify them. One teacher pointed out that most people are, subconsciously at least, aware of the answers to their own problems, and verbalization can open ones awareness and enable them to tackle their problems.

In the initial workshop, teachers refined the design of the workshop, and drew up the following broad vision of what the workshops would be used for:

- training in education
- developing professionalism
- creating a sharing culture
- developing the quality of teaching
- fostering the commitment of teachers
- developing a spirit of team-work and mutual support

None of these suggestions apply specifically to the concept of using video for peer observation; however, they do indicate a foundation of beliefs that could support "development" existed among the participants.

A video recording of consenting teachers at work was also shown. The participants were asked if and how video could be used as part of a long term teacher development initiative. Since many teachers were eager to observe their peers in the classroom, teachers could be encouraged to take a video camera along to one of their classes and present parts of those video recordings in the workshops. This idea was met with a mixture of enthusiasm and reluctance. Reluctance is understandable since presenting one's video to a group of peers is akin to having several observers in one's classroom. Merely the word "observation" conjures up the terrifying feeling of "evaluation." The depth of effect often depends on their experiences. Fitzpatrick suggests:

> It may be that the judgemental role of the observer in such instances makes teachers subsequently reluctant to let a colleague into their classroom. Consequently, it is important to remove any notion of 'the right way to teach' and to provide a clear framework for the way that the observations are to be carried out if the scheme is to be constructive, 'safe' and rewarding. (1995, p. 14) Thus, the first issue to address at our training sessions was creating safe, rewarding environment that was also interactive and constructive.

Our participants are still struggling with the concept of constructive criticism. To

offer criticism that is both phrased constructively and then taken constructively can be hard — at times it seems impossible. "Most observation is for teacher-evaluation purposes, with the result that teachers generally regard observation as a threat. This leads to tension in the classroom, and tension between teacher and observer at any pre- or post-observation meetings" (Sheal, 1989, p. 93). We are so accustomed to this evaluation paradigm that we often express thoughts more harshly than we intend, particularly when those issues are closely related to ego-intensive topics: faith, ethics, and in our case, career. We approached this challenge from two angles based on Edges ideas from his text *Cooperative Development* (1992), and Faneslows "mirroring" concept from *Contrasting Conversations* (1992).

Particularly important in cooperative development is the idea of an "Understander," a person who can understand a colleague's ideas in a judgement-free context and who can by reflection help that colleague better understand himself and choose his own direction for growth. The term reflection echoes Faneslows mirroring. Faneslows concept, however, comes from the opposite direction: the listener sees his own reflection in the speaker, "as I look in my lens I consider you a mirror; I hope to see myself through your teaching" (1988, p. 115). We hoped that sensitizing activities for these two purposes would create the necessary environment. Admittedly, this was a new approach for us and for our teachers. As a case in point, when we presented Faneslows quote above, a teacher whom we consider very sensitive to emotional issues reacted quite strongly: "This is bull___!" she said. Her reaction illustrates the breadth of the paradigm shift we were asking of our teachers, and we had a long way to go.

The sessions

A regular development workshop to include video observation was proposed by us, in response to teacher suggestions. Decisions about framework and content were left to the participants. Since participants "buy into" the scheme, they have a personal investment in making it successful, as Nunan notes:

> Following the principle that adults value their own experience as a resource for further learning and that they learn best when they have a personal investment in the program, workshop content should, as far as possible, be derived from the participants themselves. (1989, p. 112)
>
> Administrative consultation would be both available and low profile. Thus, the participants were empowered to direct their own professional development. Here is the framework that was chosen:
>
> - An atmosphere of mutual trust and support is encouraged so that individuals can develop as teachers.
> - Each week, one teacher chooses a class, and gains the students' permission to record the class.
> - The teacher video records all or part of the lesson. Before the workshop the teacher edits the video for use in a single workshop.
> - The teacher acts as presenter and sets the scene and the task(s).
> - Observers make every effort to be non-judgmental during discussion.
> - Criticism is to be avoided and feedback is to be constructive.

The participants discussed ways of overcoming reluctance to show others anything but the best clips of their lessons. "One can in fact learn as much from instances of poor practice as one can from successful practice" (Nunan, 1989, p. 112). It was hoped that the participants would overcome their inhibitions in trying to understand performance to attain their potential following Underhill's (1992) equation, Performance + Development = Potential. The aim of showing and watching was clearly stated as not evaluation but self-exploration. "Observing others or ourselves to see teaching differently is not the same as being told what to do by others. Observing to explore is a process: observing to help or evaluate is a product" (Faneslow, 1992, p. 183).

Another important issue for our group was the intrusive effect of a video camera in our classrooms. On many occasions learners' behavior is altered significantly with the introduction of an observer. Students, too, have an aversion to being observed, if they

feel they are being evaluated! Through example and practice, these difficulties were addressed in a variety of ways —student control of the equipment, making the taking of the video part of the lesson, placing the camera in the farthest corner of the room, videotaping the teacher rather than the students — with a corresponding variety of effects.

After discussion, thought, and preparation, the teachers bundled up their cameras, went to their classes, recorded themselves, did their editing, bit the bullet, and shared their ideas. The specific workshops and the details of the workshops are, for this article, not as important as the effects on teachers' professional development.

Feedback and reflections

After several months of the project, we elicited feedback from the twenty-odd participants in the workshops — including ones that had attended and later opted out. The most frequent comment regarded a desire for more structured or specific workshops. We were a little taken aback, because, as I mentioned earlier, our teacher education program includes more structured, technique-specific training in things like error correction and classroom management. Further discussion revealed that many who wanted more specifics were actually commenting more on the inconsistency of the video presenters' presentations. Some presenters carefully edited their videos, created worksheets and other tasks based on their ideas for their own video, while others simply showed their video and asked for feedback and discussion. Indeed, it is a valid comment. How much can quality be improved by administrative involvement, and more clearly stated expectations, and how much variation is inherent in participant-centered workshops where teachers have different teaching styles? The question of how quality affects learner/participant-centered projects is an excellent subject for future research.

Another comment that was almost as frequent was a hope for more guidance or a sense of direction. Each workshop by its nature was modular. Not only because we were dealing with different teachers, and classes, but also because there was no way to guarantee the same participants from one week to the next. This seems linked to our learning paradigm. Participants seemed to be asking to improve in tangible or measurable ways from week to week, so that they could build toward a goal. Perhaps some grouping of focus in videos could take place, yet chances are that such a structure would prove more detrimental than beneficial. The very nature of the program focuses on long term benefits and continuing development. The desire for short term, measurable gains seems to run counter to those goals. Significant anecdotal evidence supports our belief that these long term goals are being met. Teachers have made comments like: "I'm really pleased. Since I started teaching here I've really changed my teaching. It's so much better" or "I really like teaching here, we get so much support and training."

While some of our support for the success of the project is anecdotal, we have seen tangible changes in interaction patterns among the teaching staff. Where the amount of time they spent in our head office doing research, preparation, and administration had been minimal before, we now had large numbers of teachers coming in on a regular basis, and quite often starting an hour before the workshops, and continuing for an hour or more after. Administrative details — reports, scheduling, etc. — ran much more smoothly. Social interaction between teachers also increased, which may not have direct effects on professional development, but a greater sense of community within the institution must be a plus. A few teachers even began doing joint research projects which have turned into training sessions for other teachers and may turn into something more.

These blossoming projects are indeed the gem of our workshop project. Tessa Woodward similarly describes a ripple effect in teaching and training:

> A more natural way forward may be to start experimenting and apply insights one at a time. This fits the current 'post-method' thinking and is in line with the current metaphor: the 'teacher as researcher'. . . . You may start with an apparently tiny change and find that the ripple effect is considerable and beneficial throughout the course. (1996, p. 9)

Our ripple effects include the research mentioned above, teaching retreats, materials development, simulations for working toward institutional goals, as well as task forces to share information and address issues among different sections. The kernel of change is working and growing from the impetus of this joint administrative/teacher video observation project.

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Cross-cultural Aspects of Teachers' Roles

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Recent research by the presenter in Teacher Education courses in Japan and the U.S. has shown that teachers in these two countries see their role in the classroom very differently. These future and present teachers have different views of the ideal characteristics required to pursue the career of teaching. Different qualities may be desired to be perceived as a good teacher in Japan and this also may account for differences between outcomes in the two school systems.

The Statistical Survey

In the study, two clases of future teachers (25 Japanese teachers of English and 25 American teachers) were asked to rate the most important characteristics in a good teacher. The results of the survey showed a distinct culturally bound view of the ideal characteristics required to pursue a career in teaching. In the survey the subjects listed the characteristics which they viewed as most important in the teachers they most admired in their secondary school experience. In this way the qualities were listed and ranked. A comparison of the top rated qualities chosen by each group is as follows.

"A good teacher is someone who _____."

	Survey in Japan	Survey in the U.S.
gives good advice	88%	4%
helps students feel comfortable	71%	?
is interesting	65%	83%
helps students to improve	65%	?
is understandable	59%	17%
knows students well	59%	?
makes students think	53%	57%
gives a lot of information*	53%	61%
is understanding and kind	53%	43%
is friendly	53%	43%
is fair	53%	26%
respects students	?	43%
is organized	?	52%
is dedicated	?	39%
motivates students	?	48%
encourages creativity	?	39%

*Intelligent and Knowledgeable
? = subjects did not choose this quality

While the two groups of teachers agreed on some of the qualities (interesting, makes students think, gives lots of information, friendly, understanding, and kind), there are other characteristics on which the two groups did not agree. The Japanese teachers emphasized that the teacher should give good advice (88%), know students well (59%), make students feel comfortable (71%), and help students improve (65%). The American teachers listed other qualities as more important to them: respects students (43%), is organized (52%), is dedicated (39%), motivates students (48%), and encourages creativity (39%). Understandable was a characteristic which 59% of the Japanese teachers listed, but only 17% of the American teachers agreed. For American teachers it was most important that a teacher be interesting (83%), but for the Japanese teachers this was tied for third most important at 65%.

The results of this study, if they hold true for other groups of teachers in both countries, would have far reaching implications for the teaching profession, for teacher training, and for the educational systems of both countries (Wright 1993, 1994, 1995). In order to test some hypotheses about differences between the two countries, an effort was made to collect other kinds of evidence which would corroborate similar conclusions about the differences between the educational process in the two countries. One type of evidence which was presented was in the form of videotapes of students' practice teaching. Another type was classroom observation in both countries.

Videotaped Evidence

Videos of students' practice teaching in Japan and the U.S. were shown to illustrate some differences in teaching style. Portions of the videotaped practice lessons illustrate how the teaching style which the student teachers deemed important correspond to some characteristics which they listed as essential to good teaching.

In Videotape example A, an American teaching candidate conducts a U. S. History class for Japanese students. In her lesson plan, she was going to discuss the reasons for the Vietnam War. However, her students had expected her to give a lecture on that chapter. She planned to have a class discussion with the students and hoped that they had read the chapter about the Vietnam War in the assigned text and that they would be able to discuss opposing views on the war in such a way as to demonstrate their critical thinking skills on a controversial topic. However, she was

unprepared for the response of Japanese students who refused to look at her and declined to volunteer information or disagree with assertions she was making. As she tried to get her students to discuss the topic in a critical way, they continued to look at their desks politely with little comment until the teacher changed her method to a more acceptable lecture mode.

In Videotape Example B, a pair of Japanese teacher candidates conduct an English class for Japanese students. These students stood formally in front of the class and asked the students two at a time to read the dialogue about students meeting in a cafeteria on campus from a text that they had been given. The pair of teachers modeled and explained the dialogue for the class beforehand. However, the students responded as required by reading the dialogues but without any additional style or inflections of their own and without much enthusiasm.

In Videotape Lesson C, four American teacher candidates conduct an integrated Science class for their classmates who posed as immigrant children. In this lesson, the teachers read a science story book about a tree in the rain forest. First, they got the students' attention by creating a scene with posters, sounds, music, and costumes. As one teacher read, the other teachers took turns acting out the scenes in the book and finally the students were asked to take part in the activities in a sort of readers' theater competition between groups of students. There was good involvement of students, and the teachers allowed plenty of room for creativity.

The differences in the teaching methods in the three groups reflect basic differences in what was perceived by the teachers to be the best way to present their material. In examples B (practicing dialogues) and C (an interactive media lesson), the teachers felt that they knew their students' expectations for a lesson and they tried to conform to these expectations. In example A, the teacher misunderstood the expectations of the students who had been anticipating a lecture and were prepared to take notes. It was the teacher who had to change her methods.

Classroom Observations

Classroom observations by this researcher in Japan and the U.S. confirm that the videotapes reflect an accurate picture of how classes are being conducted differently in the two countries. This researcher believes that the differences in classroom behavior are indicative of the differences in expectation of the students.

In Example A, from a Japanese junior high school classroom in Kobe, students were asked to practice dialogues much as in the videotape B. After this, the students sat at their desks individually writing out English grammatical exercises. The teacher stayed in the front of the class most of the time and only circulated late in the class period to check answers to questions that the students had completed individually.

In Example B, from a Japanese college in Tokyo, the professor stood in front of the class reading from a notebook of Economics lectures while the students copied what he was saying. At times he paused from his lecture to let students catch up to where he was in his notebook while he wrote some figures on the board.

In Example C from a U.S. History classroom in a California high school, the teacher began by asking students to take 10 minutes to imagine that they were soldiers in World War I and were writing a letter home from the Front. What things would they write about concerning the war and what things would they say about other events of the day? How would they have felt about fighting in the war? Next they were asked to make maps of the current territorial boundaries of countries of that time period. Finally they split into groups to create U.S. History questions for a "Jeopardy contest" that would be held the following day. They students seemed interested and engaged in their activity as the teacher circulated and gave help and encouragement.

Conclusions

Although it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from a limited sample, it appears that the evidence is indicative of different outcomes in the educational systems of Japan and the U.S. especially in

the area of teachers, students, teacher training, and the educational system as a whole.

In the area of teachers' outcomes, one implication of the study seems to be that different qualities may be needed to be a successful teacher in Japan than are required to be successful in the U.S. Thus a teacher who is educationally qualified to teach in the U.S. (Celce-Murcia, 1991, pp. 5-9) may lack the other characteristics necessary for teaching in Japan (Wright 1994) and the converse may also be true. The reason for differences is probably that our schools reflect our cultural values and the cultural norms that we wish to instill in our students.

In the area of student outcomes, an important implication is that differences in the outcomes of the school experiences (in the two countries) could be tied to the different characteristics needed by teachers in the two cultures or educational goals in the two cultures. In the U.S. school system, for example, where creativity and individuality or critical thinking are stressed, the students who exit from the system will have developed their creativity and individuality. Whereas in Japan, where creativity and individuality are not necessarily encouraged, the students will be less well developed in this way.

In the area of teacher training, it is important to note that Japanese classrooms are monocultural. But between 1980 and 1990, over 7.1 million people from diverse cultures immigrated to the U.S. thus impacting on the public schools (Garcia, 1994, p. 7). This means that teacher training in states such as California with large numbers of immigrants needed to take into account the diverse background of students coming to school (Darder, 1991, pp. 118-128). Thus, special teacher training needed to be given so as to prepare teachers for teaching diverse students (Nieto, 1996, p. 353). Similarly, any school system with large numbers of non-native students will need to adapt teacher training and classroom practices to suit the students' needs. As a result, teachers who are trained to teach in these systems are prepared to teach in the multicultural or foreign culture setting.

In the area of the educational system, it seems that even the goals of the educational systems of the two countries are different. In the U.S. there may be more emphasis on treating each student as a unique individual responsible for his own actions in society whereas in Japan there may be a need to reaffirm the responsibilities of each member of the class to work together to accomplish their goals. Thus, any changes in teaching methods need to be balanced against the changes which will result in society as a whole (Wright, 1995, p. 13). Changes in teachers' roles, teaching methods, and teaching style in a country may lead to unexpected changes in the society.

Questions from the participants

Question: You said that your study assumed that the student teachers were patterning their expectations for good teachers on the teachers that they had experienced in their own schooling. What happens if we don't admire anyone that we have had for a teacher?

Answer: Yes, that is a valid point. What does happen in the case that you have seen nothing to emulate in previous teachers? I think that your previous teachers have influenced you to react against the model of teaching that they represented. Isn't it possible that you are reacting against what you have experienced by trying to find a better way to teach?

Question: I wonder whether a teacher could modify the way students learn in his classroom. Is it possible to help them develop their learning style or is this just a form of the cultural imperialism that Dr. Braj Kachru spoke of in his plenary address?

Answer: I think that the type of cultural imperialism referred to by Kachru (1996) and Edge (1996) is a conscious effort on the part of a teacher to modify behavior as he wants it to be. In one such scenario, a teacher from another country comes to Japan and requires students to modify their previous learning style in favor of a style which the teacher prefers. What follows is a mismatch of the teacher's and the students' expectations. On the other hand, learner development involves a teacher helping students to find their own ideally suited learning style (Chamot and O'Malley, 1994, pp. 16-17.) whether or not it matches that of the teacher.

Question: Isn't it possible that an ESL

teacher might teach students to behave differently in their classes (for example, to question authority) and perhaps cause a potentially threatening situation for other teachers in their school?
Answer: Yes, this is a real problem in some classrooms where visiting teachers have been invited to team teach with local teachers (Snow, 1996, pp. 38-39, 276). The visiting teacher proposed teaching students how to respond in the way that he, the teacher, wanted. In other words, to develop their learning style to match those of the teacher. But the local teachers in the school did not want this kind of behavior in their classes and felt threatened. But without a concerted effort on the part of all of their teachers, students will probably not be able to rapidly adapt to such a change in teaching style for just one ESL class per day. Obviously if the other teachers do not want to change their own teaching methods to conform to the ESL teacher's preferred style then changes will not occur.

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Materials Writers NSIG Workshop: Professional Critique of Preliminary Textbook Manuscripts

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The workshop organizer and moderator was Jim Swan, Materials Writers (MWNSIG) Chair. The four editors who kindly agreed to participate were: Nancy Baker (Prentice-Hall, Asia); Michael Boyd (Longman, Asia); Chris Foley (Oxford University Press); and Debbie Goldblatt (Cambridge University Press).

Prior to the workshop, calls were made through The Language Teacher and the MWNSIG newsletter for textbook manuscripts (MS's) to be presented

anonymously to the participating editors for reviewing. There were four submissions, all attractively presented:

1. a conversational course textbook
2. an English-through-music book
3. an activity book
4. a general four-skills book

They were generally considered by the editors to target too small a niche to become viable commercial textbooks. Each made some use of computer graphics but the fourth one in particular was complimented on its design and layout.

The editors all complimented the workshop afterwards, contrasting its specificity to similar TESOL workshops, which have usually been too general and without actual MS's to focus comments on. Unfortunately, comments on the individual MS's at this JALT96 MWNSIG workshop were very brief due to time constraints. The editors' comments are summarized in the following section.

General comments on publishers' criteria for acceptance of a textbook manuscript

The main point made, both at the beginning and at the end of the workshop, was that developing a working relationship with a publisher is the best way to get published, if only because that is the way publishers organize their projects. Sending a manuscript to an editor without any prior communication is generally unproductive, since the MS will probably not even be looked at. There are few exceptions to this rule, and the extensive general comments from the four editors elaborated on the reasons why unsolicited materials have a very high probability of being rejected.

Michael Boyd explained that his company publishes 60-70 textbook titles a year, from specifically organized projects. In addition, 100-200 unsolicited proposals are received. With works of fiction this is no problem, but unsolicited MS's in the field of language teaching are normally destined for the rubbish bin. If a publishing editor even looks at such a MS, he is likely to ask him?herself the following questions:

- Do we need it? Do we already have something fitting this niche?
- Does it fit into the company's long-term plan? (Most companies have various long-term strategies in play.)
- Are there any resources to invest in it? Do we have the staff?
- Is it good? Good is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for acceptance.
- Will the author promote? That is, is the author well-known?

Chris Foley fully endorsed the above points and added the following:

- Does this MS make an educational contribution? That is, does it provide a unique, interesting solution to learning problems?
- Will it have a wide enough audience to make publishing worthwhile? In particular, can non-native teachers use it without extra explanation?

Debbie Goldblatt added that the book should be self-explanatory and able to stand by itself. She encouraged prospective authors to call their chosen editor first and talk about their ideas. Nancy Baker advised that before presenting their material to a professional editor, authors should first show their material to co-workers and let them pilot it in order to iron out the inevitable preliminary glitches. This basic rule applies even for projects that have been agreed upon.

Points to consider in textbook writing and preparation

1. Proposal: Provide the publisher with a clearly written, rational proposal arguing the reasons why (s)he should consider your textbook.
2. Competition: Know the market and know your competitors; find out which books yours would compete with and include these titles in your proposal.
3. Assumptions: What do target students already know about the subject and skills to be taught?
4. Organization: Plan the appearance of new grammar; it should not just appear but be built on and prepared

for in previous sections, etc.

5. Layout: Have a strong page layout (a) to ensure that the information on the page is communicated most effectively (this is applicable to all materials whether they are intended for publication or not); and (b) to determine the value of the manuscript.
6. Art specifications: The visual idea of the page (arrangement of text and pictures, etc.) is very important; rough drawings are perfectly acceptable.
7. Balance: A text on writing, for example, should not be limited to providing different types of letter format, etc.
8. Timing: 45 or 90 minute chapters, for example (well-defined "chunks"); note that in Japan teachers are said to prefer shorter lessons.
9. Signposting: Illustrate different stages/sections of the book.
10. Information ("teacher talk"): Text not actually for use by students belongs in the teachers' manuals or handouts; the main text should be mostly activities.

Among the various other points discussed, it was stated that copyright is the author's responsibility. Permission for all copyrighted material an author wishes to include in a textbook must be obtained before the publishing process begins. It was noted in particular that permission to use advertisements is very hard to obtain from the advertising companies; and that the length of time taken to obtain film copyright releases renders them too troublesome for publishers to consider. Still pictures used in language textbooks are usually obtained from agencies, which charge as much as US$1000 per photograph.

The main message of this workshop, then, was that the first move for the prospective textbook writer should be to approach a publisher to negotiate the writing of materials that fulfill the publisher's criteria. The route to becoming an established textbook writer usually begins with volunteering to critique or field-test textbooks already in preparation, as this is a good way to build a working relationship with a publisher. Textbook authorship then begins with an invitation to write teachers' versions of textbooks about to be published. If this is successful, main textbook authorship will follow.